When Brian asked for the umpteenth time if the class could read instead of “doing English,” I put aside my plan for the day and decided to observe my students as they read. They settled quickly into their books with no fidgeting, no requests for bathroom breaks, no need for me to redirect the energy of my active group of fourteen year olds. Sprawled out on the floor in front of me was every English teacher’s dream. As I drove home that day, I wondered how she could pursue new knowledge of her content area. Regina says, “It started out as such a little question. After attending a writing workshop to learn how to create a cookbook of my grandmother’s recipes, I began to explore how I might apply my new skills to my cooking course by allowing students to create a cookbook for their final assessment. I was amazed at what they produced, and sought help from our technology teacher to learn to use software that students needed to use to do their work. I also asked our photography teacher to assist students with instruction in digital photography and composition techniques to illustrate the students’ recipes. We jerry-rigged a studio complete with lighting, camera tripods, linens, props and plates of all different colors and shapes. My CFG helped me to craft a research question that was broad enough to encompass all the learning I was doing in order to help my students. They supported my work and donated their time to help me. “The prevailing culture in my classroom prior to my research was ‘from pot to mouth’. All food prepared was consumed instantly, with no reflection of the process and little analysis, other than taste, of the work. Now, students must demonstrate writing, editing, and presentation skills in addition to the skills involved in following a recipe and cooking a meal. Creating a cookbook is an authentic task that builds a tremendous repertoire of skills.”

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